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A SERMON

Preach'd at the
Parish-Church of St. Andrew's
Wardrobe, Sept. 16th, 1703.

Before the
INCORPORATED SOCIETY
OF
APOTHECARIES of London.

By *Nicholas Brady*, D. D. Minister of Richmond
in Surry, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her
Majesty.

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T O

The Worshipful the Master and Wardens, the Court of Assistants, Gentlemen of the Livery, and Freemen, of the Ingenious Society of A P O T H E C A R I E S of London.

GENTLEMEN,

I Am not ignorant that such Occasional-Discourses as this, lose much of their value by being made Publick; since every body is not affected with those particular Hints, which are necessary to make them suitable to the Audience they are design'd for: However, being convinced that the same kind Intentions, which enclined you to give me Twice an opportunity of serving you, are

the obliging Motives which now induce you, to engage me to publish this Discourse also; I cannot excuse my self from paying you that Respect, which your repeated Obligations make so justly your due. And as I have several particular Engagements, which will not suffer me to deny so small a Request, to your Worthy Master Mr. Deputy Gardiner; so the many Civilities I have received from the whole Society, make me willing and ready to embrace all opportunities of approving my self,

Gentlemen,

Your most Faithful

Humble Servant,

Richmond, Sept.
29th, 1703.

N. BRADY.

A

Prov. 17. Former Part of the 22d Verse.

A merry Heart doth good like a Medicine.

THE wisest amongst Men, and the most skilful of Physicians; who fully understood the Nature of all Simples, and spake of them from the Cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, to the Hyssop that groweth out of the Wall; who also made it his Business to prove his Heart with Mirth, and with-held not from it any manner of Joy; as the joint Result both of his Wisdom and Experience, prescribes a merry Heart as the richest of all Cordials, and assures us, that this will do good like a Medicine. I have therefore made choice of this Aphorism of Solomon, as a seasonable subject for your present entertainment; because the former part has respect to that commendable cheerfulness, which is usually to be met with upon such occasions as these; and the latter part has relation to that particular Society, of which my Audience at this time is more

especially composed. And I shall handle it, for your Instruction, after the following manner.

1st. I shall enquire into the Sense of this Expression, and explain what is meant by *a merry Heart.*

2dly. I shall examine the Truth of this Maxim ; and prove the *Wise-man's Assertion*, that *a merry Heart doth good.* And

3dly. I shall consider it with regard to the Comparison ; and shew, how *a merry Heart doth good like a Medicine.*

1st. Then, I shall enquire into the Sense of this Expression, and explain what is meant by *a merry Heart.*

We are not to suppose that the *Wise-man* here, intends to countenance or encourage any *excessive Jollity*, or the extravagant Sallies of the *Libertine* and *Licentious*: No, there is a *Laughter* which he pronounces to be *Madness*, and a *Mirth* of which he affirms, that it is but *Vanity*. We are therefore only to understand, by the *merry Heart* recommended in my Text, such an *easie and agreeable*

able temper of Mind, as may dispose a Man at all times to be innocently chearfull, with Prudence, Decency, and Moderation. From which short, but full description of it, we may observe, that True Mirth is a more serious thing than People imagine it to be ; that it is wholly inconsistent with a foolish Levity, and utterly incompatible with a vicious Follity. The merriment of the Drunkard in his Midnight Revellings, where the Mirth is not his own, but borrowed from the Liquor ; and the Wine which before smiled in the Glass, carries on the Humour and laughs in the Man ; can have no pretences to the deserved Commendation, of this easy and agreeable Temper of Mind. The irregular Follity of some uneven Tempers, which stick at nothing when the merry Fit is on them, and then sink down into Melancholy and Heaviness ; can have no share in this amiable Disposition, which enclines a Man at all times to be innocently chearfull : The airy Pleasantry of impertinent Buffoons, who are gay to extremity, though never so unseasonably ; who can jest in a Church, and be merry at a Funeral ; can lay no claim to this commendable Alacrity, which is regulated by Prudence, and Decency, and Moderation. That chearfulness of Mind which the Wise-man

here treats of, does not play lightly upon the Surface of the Soul, but is seated and fixed in the very Center of it; and like the pleasing Solemnity of some *religious Festival*, has an agreeable mixture of *seriousness* and *delight*.

There are several *Qualifications* of great Moment and Importance, which a Man must endeavour to be possessed of, before he can attain to and keep up constantly, that *merry Heart* which I have now been describing. And the

1st. Of these Qualifications is a *Good Conscience*. In vain shall we attempt to be truly *cheerful*, unless all things be quiet and serene within; our *Mirth* will be only from the Teeth outwards, without making any lasting impression upon our *Minds*: In the midst of all our pretended Jollity, we shall feel the lashes of an inward Tormentor; and tho' we may *deceive others* with an out-side of Merriment, yet we cannot carry the Fallacy so far, as to *put a cheat upon our selves*. We may perhaps for some time gag this uneasy *Remembrancer*, or lull him to sleep with the delights of Sin; but he will rouze himself, like a *Giant refreshed with Wine*, and make sad amends for his former *Drowsiness*: If we seek for Diversion amongst our *loose Companions*, he will be intruding, like an

unwelcome Guest, and will be whispering unpleasing Truths into our Ears ; till he palls our Appetite when it is most eager, and dashes our sweetest Draughts with *Gall* and *Worm-wood*. And therefore to imagine we can have a *merry Heart*, unless we first secure to our selves *Peace of Conscience*; is to suppose a Man at *ease* upon the Engine of his Torture, or happy and well pleased under the most intolerable Circumstances. But how *easy and agreeable must his Temper of Mind be*, who has nothing within to ruffle or discompose him ! What can shock his *Mirth* who has an inward *Comforter, that speaks Peace to his Soul and healing to his Bowels* ! How well must he be disposed to be at all times *cheerful*, who *has confidence towards God, because his Heart condemns him not*; and whose rejoicing is this, the *Testimony of his Conscience* ! As a wounded Spirit is a perpetual uneasiness, so a *Good Conscience is a continual Feast*: and that Heart only can be truly *merry*, which is constantly provided with such a Fund of Satisfaction. The *Atheist or Profane* may have an *out-side of Gaiety*, and may boast that they have extracted the very *Quintessence of Delight*; but their forced *Mirth* has nothing that is *Substantial* at the bottom; they want the *Foundation* of an *innocent*

innocent chearfulness; and in the midst of their Merriment their condition is like *His*, who is stung with a *Tarantula*, & dies laughing. A

2d. Qualification, which is absolute necessary, to obtain and keep up the *merry Heart* here mentioned, is a *due disregard for the things of this World.*

He that is too solicitous about temporal advantages, and indulges himself in a fondness for the enjoyments of *this Life*, lays himself open thereby to a thousand odd accidents, which may disturb his *Mirth*, and interrupt his *Satisfaction*: Discontents and Murmuring, Complainings and Repinings, will be the usual entertainments of such a Man, when he meets with unavoidable Disappointments or Losses: And these are inconsistent with a *merry Heart*, which can never be found without *true Contentment*. For if he places his delight in uncertain *Riches*, he must be racked with care in the getting and the keeping, and with grief when they *take Wing and fly away from him*: If his Aim be at the *Honours* and *Preferments* of this World ; how much pains must he take in compassing and enjoying them ! How truly is he a *Slave* in the midst of his *Grandeur*, though his *Chains* may be *Golden* and his *Goalers* *bare-beaded* !

headed ! And what uneasiness must he feel, when a well-formed Calumny, shall reduce this *Great Man* to the level of the *Vulgar* ! He then that would support an inward *chearfulness*, must not suffer it to depend upon such things as are without him ; he must keep his Happiness within his *own Power* ; by carefully practising the *Apostle's* short Lesson, *in whatsoever State he is, therewith to be contented* : The World and all its Furniture must hang loose about him, and then its Changes and Contingencies will never discompose him ; but the *Mirth* of his *Heart* may remain still intire, under all the *vicissitudes* of his *outward concernments*. A

3d. Qualification, which is also necessary, in order to keep up this *chearfulness* of *Spirit*, is a *becoming application to the Duties of our Calling*.

The *industrious* Man has the best cause to be *merry* ; for as Idleness is an Inlet to all manner of Wickedness, so is it also to Black and Melancholy Surmises ; it lays a Man open to peevishness and discontent ; and we never are so irksome and tedious to our selves, as when we are at a loss how to pass away our time. When the *Isralites* were in the Wilderness, idle and unemployed ; when their Hunger was allayed by Miracles, and

the

the Rock gave Water to quench their Thirst; we find the result of it to be Murmuring and Repinings; and the Flesh-pots of Egypt, purchased by their Industry, left a sweeter relish upon their Imaginations; than the Food of Angels sent down from Heaven, which (as the Wise-man words it) was prepared without their Labour. But when Men are taken up with their lawful Employments, their thoughts are not at leisure to admit of this infection; they can never be induced to complain of their condition, while they find themselves in the way of improving it daily; nor has the Devil that advantage of infusing into their Minds, a loathing and disquiet of their present Circumstances, or too anxious a carefulness in relation to the future. Industry then is highly subservient to true cheerfulness; both as it secures us against want and all its uneasy Attendances; and as it shuts out those Temptations to which Idleness exposes us, and which are jointly pernicious to our Mirth and to our Innocence. Let us listen to the Wise-man's decision of this Case; the Soul (says he) of the Sluggard desireth and bath nothing; there is an account of the uneasy State of the Idle; but the Soul of the Diligent shall be made fat; there is the success and satisfaction of the Industrious.

If then we take care to secure a good Conscience, to wean our selves from an over fondness for temporal Things, and to be duly conversant in the duties of our Calling ; we are then qualified for obtaining and keeping up that merry Heart, of which the Wise-man here gives us so noble a Character. And this leads me to the consideration of my 2d Particular ; in which I am to examine the Truth of this Maxim , and to prove the Wise-mans Assertion, That a merry Heart doth good.

That may very justly be said to do us good, which is instrumental in promoting our Quiet and Felicity : Now there are Four Things, which if we are possessed of, we may pronounce our Condition to be easie and happy ; a clear Reputation, a comfortable Fortune, a healthful Body, and a quiet Mind : And these are not way more effectually secured, than by that innocent Chearfulness mentioned in my Text.

1st. As to a clear and unblemished Reputation. The merry-hearted Man is of an obliging Temper; his Deportment at all times is sweet and engaging; and he endeavours to promote, as much as

he can, the Diversion and Satisfaction of all those whom he deals with : And what can more recommend one to the good Opinion of Others, than such a *pleasing* and *amiable* Disposition as this ? And as there is nothing in his *Behaviour*, that is sour, morose, or supercilious ; so neither is there any thing in his *Discourse*, that can cause Uneasiness in those with whom he converses ; for his *Mirth* being always seasoned with *Prudence* and *Decency*, he never runs into the errore of those Pretenders to *Wit*, who would rather at any time lose their *Friend* than their *Jest* : Thus is he always cautious not to give any Offence, and he is also the farthest of any Man from taking it ; and by the *Candour* and *Civility* with which he treats others, he secures their *Esteem* and their *Friendship* to himself : all wish well to him, and speak well of him ; because he thus makes himself by his *Mirth* and *Inoffensiveness*, a delight and a blessing to those with whom he Associates.

2dly. As to a convenient and comfortable *Fortune*, that which establishes a Man's *Reputation*, is the most likely means to make his *Fortune* too ; and a *merry Heart* being the best Instrument to

to secure the *one*, cannot be supposed Defective in advancing the *other*; every one will be glad to give him a helping Hand, who is so universally valued and beloved; and any Misfortune that should touch him nearly would be looked upon and redress'd as a *common Calamity*: Here is nothing in such a Man of Trick or Cunning, which may tempt People to stand upon their Guard against him; but every one is willing to deal with, and encourage him, the *clearfulness* of whose Temper makes him open and undesigning: That *Application to Business* (which is *one* of his good Qualities,) will entitle him to those Advantages which are the Rewards of *Industry*: And his *Contentment* in all *Conditions* (which is another of them,) will make him easie with a *Competency*, and secure him from those Hazards, which are oftentimes their Ruine that grasp at too much. Thus he thrives *moderately*, and therefore *safely*; and enjoys as *much* of this World as may support his *Clearfulness*; but aims not at *so much* of it as may *disquiet* and *distract* him.

3dly. As to a *vigorous* and *healthful Body*. When the Heart is *merry*, the Spirits are all alive, the Blood circulates with a becoming Briskness, and every Member receives its due share of Refreshment: But when this Fountain of Life is frozen up by *Melancholy*, the whole Man is oppressed with Languor and Stupidity; the Spirits flag, the Blood stagnates, and the Image of Death seems to take possession of him. How many has *Envy* worn away to *Skeletons*, and fretted them into nothing but walking *Anatomies*? How many has a deep *Grief* brought to *Palsies* and *Consumptions*; either transforming them into *living Ghosts*, or making them half dead on this side the *Grave*? What better Remedy against these destructive *Poisons* than the happy Antidote of a *merry Heart*? As the Body has in some measure an Influence upon the Soul; and an Irregularity in the Organs of the former, causes an Indisposition in the Faculties of the latter: So much more has the Mind an Ascendant over the Body; and when *that* is in Disorder, *this* must suffer with it; when *that* is well at ease, *this* must share in the Advantage: And if this brisk cheerful Temper of Mind cannot wholly secure us from Diseases, yet will it

it at least support us under them ; the Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmities ; and by not letting him sink under the force of his Distemper, will both hinder its Progress, and promote its Cure.

4thly. As to a serene and quiet Mind. Since a merry Heart is inseparable from a good Conscience, it is certainly the best Instrument of our inward Tranquility. And this is a Blessing so eminently valuable, that it is to the Soul, what Health is to the Body, the Salt and Seasoning of all other Satisfactions ; without which they lose their Relish, and become insipid : Let our Reputation be never so Great ; let our Fortune be never so considerable ; let our bodily Health be never so constant ; yet if our Mind be ill at ease, all these other Delights will be tasteless or unpalatable : Unless This be at quiet, the World cannot entertain us, the Flesh cannot divert us ; a melancholy Reflection, or a Pang of Despair, shall turn all the Enjoyments of the Great or the Luxurious into Vanity, or (what is worse) Vexation of Spirit. But he that is possessed of a merry Heart, and whose Mirth is set off with those necessary Qualifications, which are already proved to be its inseparable

seperable Companions ; he (I say) and he alone , can truly be said , to enjoy that happy Peace and Tranquility of Mind ; which begins his early Heaven even in this Life , and gives him a Taste of those Joys which shall one Day be revealed .

Thus , by the great Advantages which it secures unto us , of Reputation , Fortune , Health , and Peace of Mind ; we are abundantly convinc'd of the Truth of this Aphorism , and may avow with the Wise-man , That a merry Heart doth good . I now proceed in the

3d. And last place , to consider this Maxim with regard to the Comparison , and to shew , how a merry Heart doth good like a Medicine

And here Solomon supposes that a Medicine does good ; nor can it otherwise indeed answer either its Name or its Nature : And therefore we have nothing to do in this Place with the unskillfull Preparations of Quacks and Pretenders to Physick ; which encrease the Distemper they undertake to mitigate , and do good to no body unless to the Prescriber . No , the Medicine here meant , is of a Salubrious Nature , well calculated for those

those Ends to which it is directed, the Ease and Benefit of the Patient: And a *merry Heart* may be said to do good like such a *Medicine*, after these two following manners.

1st. By expelling those ill Humours which are noxious and pernicious. And

2dly. By sweetning and correcting the whole Mass that is behind.

1st. Then, a *merry Heart* does good like a *Medicine*; because it expells those ill Humours which are noxious and pernicious. When a wise Physician sets about the Cure of a Distemper, he levels his Remedies against the Causes of it; and endeavours to drive out all such *peccant Humours*, as are Food and Nourishment to the *Disease*: By any other Method he only *palliates* the Matter; whereas this is to pluck up the Malady by the Roots. And accordingly does an innocent *Chearfulness of the Heart* work upon such *evil Dispositions* as it meets with in our *Mind*: It throws out that inward *Sharpness* which enclines us to be *angry*, and suffers it not to rankle and fester within our *Souls*: it expels those *black Thoughts* which would

would lead us to *Despair*, before the *Fancy* can brood upon them and hatch them into *Madness*: It drives forth that *Sowerness* which disposes us to *Envy*, before it gains strength to overcome our good Nature and our *Charity*: Thus does it cleanse the *Fountain*, which would else feed our Disorders, and upon that Account may be said, to do good like a *Medicine*. But,

2dly. A merry Heart does good like a *Medicine*, because it sweetens and corrects the whole Mass that is behind. When a Remedy has had so happy an Effect, as to rid the Body of those *Humours* that disturbed it, and to cast out both *Them* and the *Distemper* which they fed; there is then no further use of a *Medicine* but this; to secure the *Patient* against the Return of the Disease, by rectifying what is yet amiss, and mending his Constitution. And in like manner does an agreeable *Alacrity* of *Spirit*, proceed to regulate and correct the *Inclinations* of our *Minds*: It sweetens all the *Harshness* and *Acerbity* of our Natures; it smooths the *Ruggedness* of our Dispositions, and plains the *Unevenness* of our Tempers: If it finds any Seeds of ill *Nature* springing up;

it suppresses and kills them in the *bud*, before they bring any *Fruit* to perfection ; and by cherishing those *Inclinations* which have a *virtuous tendency*, lays the lasting Foundation within us of *Health* and *Chearfulness*. Thus does it *prevent* those Disorders which would breed *new Distempers*, and upon that account may be said to *do good like a Medicine*.

And now I should conclude my third and last Particular, of considering this Maxim in regard to the *Comparison* ; but that it may be necessary to hint a few Circumstances, in which *a merry heart* ought to resemble *a Medicine* ; and which I desire you to take notice of by way of *Caution*.

1st. We must make use of it in it's *proper Season*. That *Physick* which may at *one time* be very *beneficial*, may be downright *poyson* at *another* ; and that *innocent Mirth* which is *commendable* upon *some occasions*, may at other times administer just occasion of *disquiet*: The *Wiseman* informs us that to every thing

there is a season ; a time to weep, and a time to laugh : That cheerfulness of Spirit which becomes a *Festival*, would be very improper upon a Day of *Humiliation* ; and if we would maintain that a *merry heart* does good, we must take care that the Expressions of it be never ill timed.

2dly. We must make use of it in a fitting Proportion. Too much of the *best Physick* may be fatal to the *Patient*, and Cordials if too strong, may be as deadly as the Juice of *Hemlock*. Thus also *Mirth*, if too excessive, degenerates into *Madness*, and loses at once both it's *Innocence* and it's *Usefulness* ; when it passes the Bounds of *Reason* and *Religion*, it is no more the *merry heart* which the *Wiseman* speaks of ; than the intemperate Laughter of a *Madman* or a *Fool*, is the result and effect of a reasonable *Satisfaction*. That *Gaiety* which is commendable within its Proper Limits, becomes faulty when it swells to a Bulk that is extravagant ; and we must remember in *Morality* as well as

as in *Nature*, that all *Excesses* imply *Deformity* and *Monstrosity*. But

3dly. We must make use of it under a due *Regulation* and *Government*. That *Physick* which is designed to work effectually, must always be taken *cum Regimine*; we must be *careful* in the Management of our selves, lest otherwise it should do us more *harm* than *good*: And thus also must it be with the *Alacrity* which I am treating of; we must, according to the *Adage*, be *merry and wise*; and not suffer our *Chearfulness* to lead us into *Intemperance*, or our *Mirth* to carry us beyond good *Manners*: *Prudence* and *Decency* must be the two *Boundaries*, which must *direct* it's Motions and *stop* it's *Excursions*; and whenever we leap over these necessary *Confinements*, we are no longer *merry*, but *wild* and *licentious*.

Thus

Thus may we avoid all those Errors and Inconveniences to which an *unbridled Mirth* may be apt to betray us; and with such *Qualifications* as I formerly mentioned, and under such *Restrictions* as I have just now hinted, the *Wiseman's Aphorism* will stand good for ever, *That a merry heart doth good like a Medicine.*

Móνω Θεῷ θέξαι.

F I N I S.